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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 001657

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/RSA AND PM/RSAT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/25/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [SU](#) [NI](#) [CM](#) [DARFUR](#)

SUBJECT: MFA ON DARFUR AU PROTECTION FORCE, BAKASSI

REF: A. STATE 205152

[B](#). STATE 199577

[C](#). ABUJA 1648 AND PREVIOUS

[D](#). YAOUNDE 1443 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Political Counselor James Maxstadt for Reasons 1.5 b and d.

[1](#). (C) Polcouns met September 24 in the evening with the MFA UnderSecretary for African Affairs, Ambassador Ukonga, to make the Ref A demarche on Darfur and discuss Bakassi per Ref

[B](#). U/S Ukonga said President Obasanjo was pleased that our joint efforts on Darfur were succeeding. She was rather surprised that the AU Peace and Security Council would be meeting on Monday, September 27, as Nigeria is the PSC chair.

After stepping out to make a few phone calls, she said she thought that if such a meeting were held that day it would have been arranged by AU officials who are in New York for the UNGA.

[2](#). (C) As to the update on forces for Darfur, U/S Ukonga noted that Nigeria has long been advocating, and planning for, an expanded AU protection mission. She said Nigeria had one battalion, between 750 and 1000 soldiers depending on the exact configuration needed, ready for deployment to Darfur "on very short notice." She said she thought the AU's consideration of 3500 protectors, monitors, special units, police and staff was a bit larger than what was likely to be deployed in the short term, noting that an extra Nigerian battalion and an extra Rwandan battalion would bring the numbers closer to 2000 than 3500.

[3](#). (C) On Bakassi, U/S Ukonga noted the points from Ref B and reiterated Nigeria's commitment to working with Cameroon and other affected countries to finishing the demarcation of borders and transfer of authority. PolCouns asked about timing for progress, especially in the context of President Obasanjo's recent public reference to working maritime border issues at the Gulf of Guinea Commission. Ukonga said she thought that Obasanjo meant the Gulf of Guinea Commission would be a good place to work out future maritime border issues, but that Obasanjo did not/not mean that the return of Bakassi should wait until the Gulf of Guinea Commission was operating. "In any case," she laughed, "Cameroon would never let this issue be brought before the Gulf of Guinea Commission; Cameroon does not like the Gulf of Guinea Commission to begin with, the Gulf of Guinea Commission will be in Sao Tome, and Cameroon would sooner take it (the boundaries issue) back to the ICJ."

[4](#). (C) U/S Ukonga said she believed Presidents Obasanjo and Biya would resume working the issue as soon as the Cameroonian election was over, and that the next meeting of the Mixed Commission would be soon thereafter, most likely in early November. Ukonga made no mention of Nigerian domestic politics, other than that Cameroon had kept Bakassi from becoming an issue during Obasanjo's election in 2003, and the GON was returning the favor by helping keep it from becoming an issue in the Cameroonian election next month. There remained much work to be done on the maritime boundaries, she said, and it would be accomplished in a reasonably short time.

[5](#). (U) Minimize considered.
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